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PRESENTATION
OF THE
ROYAL AWARDS.
(At the Anniversary Meeting, May 24th, 1869.)

ROYAL MEDALS.

THE PRESIDENT addressed the Meeting as follows :—

The Founder's Medal has this year been awarded to Professor Nordenskiöld, of Stockholm, for having performed a leading part in designing and carrying out the late Swedish expeditions to Spitzbergen, by which not only has our knowledge of the geography of that part of the world been much improved and illustrated by an excellent new map of those islands, but whereby great additions have been made to our acquaintance with the zoology, botany, geology, and meteorology of the Arctic Regions.

Anxious as the Royal Geographical Society has ever been and still is to promote Arctic researches, we naturally entertain the highest respect for the noble efforts which the Swedes have made of late to open out one of the main lines through the frozen seas, by which the North Pole may, it is hoped, be approached if not reached. Seeing that our Northern friends are still persevering in the same cause, from the carrying out of which richer and more powerful maritime nations have, alas ! shrunk, our Council has decreed that the person who headed the men of science in this Swedish expedition, and obtained such important results, should be rewarded with our Founder's Medal, and thus, by our marked approbation, be cheered on to further successes.

As an honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Stockholm, and with a vivid recollection of the eminent men, from the days of Berzelius downwards, with whom I have been associated, I have peculiar gratification in handing this Medal to Baron Hochschild, the Swedish Minister, and in requesting his Excellency, the worthy representative of a Sovereign who is a distinguished geographer and one of our Royal Associates, to convey this Medal to his eminent countryman, Professor Nordenskiöld.

Then turning to Baron Hochschild, he continued :—

I beg your Excellency to understand that, whilst we have fixed upon Professor Nordenskiöld as the recipient of our highest honour, we fully recognise the great merits of the other Swedish men of science who were associated with him, and whose names are recorded in our volumes. From among those I may particularly mention M. Otto Torrell, who in 1858, at his own expense, led the way in organising and directing the first of these expeditions, which have shed so much lustre on his country, whilst it is also my pleasing duty to acknowledge how much the success of the last expedition was due to the skill of the Naval Commander, Lieutenant Fr. W. von Otter.

Baron de Hochschild thus replied :—

Mr. President, I regret exceedingly that circumstances should have prevented Professor Nordenskiöld from attending here to-day himself. Being a man of science, he is more worthy than I am to speak in this room; and he would most probably have given you some interesting details of his last important discoveries. However, his modesty, perhaps, would have proved an obstacle to expressing his gratitude, and would have prevented him telling you how very proud he is of the great honour you do him to-day. I am sure that he will consider it not only as a reward for his past labours, but as an encouragement to future deeds. You have, Mr. President, alluded to my Sovereign as a geographer. I am sure his Majesty will have much pleasure in hearing that his name was received with so much sympathy here. There were two words I noticed in what you said, Mr. President: you said, “our Northern friends.” I hope they will always retain that name.

The President then spoke of the recipient of the Patron's or Victoria Medal:—

The Victoria Medal has been adjudicated to Mrs. Mary Somerville, who, throughout a very long life, has been eminently distinguished by her proficiency in those branches of science which form the basis of Physical Geography, and who having published a most able work on that science, was recently occupied, even in her 89th or 90th year, in solving abstruse mathematical problems. This gifted woman, who, in addition to her researches into the phenomena of the heavens and the earth, has also excelled in the arts of painting, music, and all feminine accomplishments, has, like the Crichton

of earlier days, truly earned the title of "the admirable Mrs. Somerville."

On one former occasion only has the Council devoted our Patron's Medal to a lady, namely, Lady Franklin; and as in that case the Queen was pleased to approve of our having honoured that lady for her services in ascertaining the fate and establishing the glory of her husband, so in the present instance I feel convinced that our gracious Sovereign will rejoice that her effigy should be borne by one of her own sex, who has attained such a high position amongst those who have largely advanced human knowledge.

On my own part, as your President, I can truly say that no act of my life could be more grateful to my feelings than to be the medium of conveying this Victoria Medal to the eminent authoress, who, throughout a period approaching to half a century, has honoured me with her friendship.
